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News Items from the School of Education of the University of Chicago

THE INTERMEDIATE UNIT IN STATE SCHOOL SYSTEMS

Probably no part of state school administrative machinery has recently been the object of more efforts at reorganization than the unit intermediate between the local school district and the state department of education, the unit which in most states is the county school organization. T. D. Brooks, Ph.D., Baylor University, Waco, Texas, has made, as one of the studies in the New York rural school survey, an effort to discover the nature and recent evolution of this unit of school control as regards its composition, functions, and relation to the state department of education. The sources drawn on were the school laws of the several states and replies to inquiries addressed to state departments. Dr. Brooks has also made, paralleling this, a more intensive study of the situation in New York, which supplements and illustrates the general study most advantageously.

Dr. Brooks discusses, as representative types of intermediate organization, the New England plan of supervisory unions, the "county unit" plan, county boards of limited function, and the county officer plan. He concludes that the characteristic development in the twentieth century in the administrative machinery on this level is in increased emphasis on co-operative functions, such as the maintenance of high schools, the prescription of courses of study, and the provision of expert supervision and management, as opposed to purely intermediary functions. To provide for this larger program, there is generally included in the organization a lay board, usually vested with discretionary powers, along with a professional officer. This alliance seems to produce a differentiation in the functions of the lay and professional elements by which those of the latter are more definitely professionalized.

AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF THE DRAWINGS OF
KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN

It has been commonly assumed that guidance in representative drawing secures a superior drawing product. To determine quantitatively the validity of this assumption was the purpose of a recent investigation by Louis H. Sandhusen, A.M., 1920, 295 E. Fourth St., Brooklyn, New York. The study was made with two kindergarten groups. The advantages of kindergarten children for the purposes of this experiment were twofold: (1) at this age a minimum of antecedent guidance may be presupposed; and (2) development in graphic representation is very marked at this period.

Three scenes from the story of the Three Bears were selected for illustration by the children. These were drawn first without any controlled guidance under the following conditions: (1) after the teacher had told the story; (2) after the children had modeled the bears and the furniture in clay; (3) after class criticism of the drawings; and (4) after the story had been retold. Following these "free" drawings controlled guidance was introduced and drawings were made under the following conditions: (1) after a tracing of the hectograph forms of bears, Goldilocks, and the furniture; (2) after cutting and mounting hectograph forms; and (3) after seeing the instructor draw each scene upon the board. Finally the three scenes were drawn again as "free" drawings.

The results of the experiment pointed to the following conclusions: (1) controlled guidance improved very materially the drawing product; (2) the greatest improvement was secured in the representation of easily constructed objects, such as bowls, tables, and chairs, and the least improvement was secured in the representation of animal and human forms; and (3) the most marked improvement was noted after the instructor had drawn the scenes for the children. Whether the improvement was the result of this type of guidance alone or the cumulative effect of all types of guidance cannot be stated. The final "free" drawings indicated a tendency of the children to revert to their first unguided modes of graphic representation.